

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2002

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Bloomfield, Borys, Clement, Senhauser, Sullebarger and Wallace present. Members absent: Kreider, Raser, and Spraul-Schmidt.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Monday, December 17, 2001 meeting were approved (motion by Bloomfield second by Borys) as amended.

The minutes of the Monday, January 7, 2002 meeting were approved (motion by Bloomfield second by Borys).

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 1884 MADISON ROAD, EAST WALNUT HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented the staff report on this request for a COA to install a four-foot-high wrought iron fence at the corner of Madison Road and Wold Avenue and a matching six-foot high gate at the entrance pathway on Madison. A plan approved by the Board in April 2001, showed a low masonry wall at the corner location. Ms. Cowden indicated that the new fence section and gate would fit between an six-to-eight-foot-high shrubbery wall that runs along the two street frontages.

Ms. Cowden showed a site plan and drawings of the proposed fence and gate. She said that the district guidelines indicate that wrought iron fencing is not characteristic of the district. Further, the guidelines limit the height of fencing on the street front to three feet. Staff feels that the proposed fencing is simple in design and detail, is of a minimal length, is screened by the perimeter planting and appropriately delineates public and private spaces on Madison Road.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Bloomfield, second by Borys) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a four-foot-high fence and six-foot-high gate at 1884 Madison Road finding that the proposed work is consistent with the neighborhood and other site landscaping.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS & APPROVAL OF A DEVELOPMENT
PLAN IN AN EQ DISTRICT, 545 TUSCULUM AVENUE, COLUMBIA-
TUSCULUM HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Urban Conservator William Forwood presented the staff report on this request to construct a new single-family residence at 545 Tusculum Avenue. The building site lies within the Columbia-Tusculum Historic District and the Environmental Quality District 5. Mr. Forwood said that this proposal was tabled by the HCB at its December 17, 2001 meeting in order to give the applicant an opportunity to revise his design to address concerns expressed by the Columbia-Tusculum Community Council and neighboring property owners. Mr. Senhauser had appointed a committee of the Board to assist in the revisions.

Mr. Forwood summarized the changes to the design and the site plan worked out between the Board committee, the applicant and the community. He said that the Community Council reviewed the revised plans at its January 21, 2002 meeting and voted not to oppose the design as modified. Ms. Borys reported that the committee of the Board had explored various options with the developer and his architect and felt the revised design was an acceptable compromise that addressed the concerns of the Board and the neighborhood.

Mr. John Richardson and Mr. Harry Morgan were present to represent the applicant, Camden Homes. Mr. Ben Young, President of the Columbia-Tusculum Community Council who had participated in the redesign discussions with the developer and the Board committee also attended. Each expressed his appreciation for everyone's cooperation during the process.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second by Wallace) to:

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed construction of a new single-family residence at 545 Tusculum Avenue (as revised) in the Columbia-Tusculum Historic District
2. Approve the application for development permission for the proposed construction of a new single family residence at 545 Tusculum Avenue (as revised) in the Environmental Quality Hillside District #5.

**PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 8-36 WEST McMICKEN AVENUE, OVER-
THE-RHINE (NORTH) HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented the staff report on this request to rehabilitate three industrial buildings to mixed/residential use. The project includes the demolition of a contributing building at 14 West McMicken in order to provide parking for new residences and businesses. An application for the demolition was denied a COA at the January 7, 2002 HCB meeting. The denial was based on the fact that there was insufficient information on the buildings to be renovated to consider

the project as a whole; the independent demolition of 14 West McMicken was not justified by the information provided.

Ms. Kellam said that the applicant has supplied some of the additional information requested by the Board at its January 7, 2002 meeting including site and building plans and elevations for the rehabilitation. Although the new drawings are an improvement over those previously submitted, they are still incomplete in many details. Staff believes the schematics submitted are sufficient for an initial design review, but that complete architectural drawings will still be needed when the applicant returns for formal review under Section 106 and for a COA.

Ms. Kellam reviewed staff concerns for portions of the rehabilitation project that may conflict with the district guidelines including modification to window openings, replacement windows, privacy fencing and landscaping. She indicated that even with the demolition of 14 West McMicken, it would be difficult to provide even one parking space per residential unit, with no provision for commercial users or visitors. This is not only a marketing problem for the applicant, but may require a zoning variance from the Board at a later date. Ms. Kellam indicated that even though no formal decision was required by the Board, the applicant is seeking its input and a level of comfort before committing to producing professional architectural documents for the project.

Owner/developer Mr. Walter Reinhaus was present to answer questions from the Board. Mr. Reinhaus addressed the principle issues raised in the staff report. He showed the Board photographs of other industrial buildings in the district that had 1/1 sash windows, photographs of typical loft conversions with balconies, brochures on other loft projects and a copy of the Chicago landscape ordinance which he said he had used to guide his design.

Mr. Bloomfield asked Mr. Reinhaus whether he would seek historic tax credits for the project. Mr. Reinhaus responded that he had been advised that the project was too small to syndicate, that he could not use the credits himself and that certification would require additional front money. Mr. Bloomfield said that in his experience, he had found the process not as onerous as it might seem and that its requirements will be similar to those under Section 106 review. He offered to give Mr. Reinhaus the name of a contact familiar with the process.

Mr. Senhauser questioned the logic and extra expense of expanding the window openings. He suggested the larger window cuts be limited to the secondary elevations. Mr. Reinhaus answered that he needed the additional light and had seen this treatment before. He showed a photograph of a metal balcony on a similar loft project. Ms. Sullebarger asked for clarification on the window coding on the elevation drawings. Ms. Borys said that widening the window openings on only a portion of the front façade was disruptive to the original symmetry of the central building.

Mr. Senhauser asked for clarification on the parking lot design and its screening. Mr. Reinhaus said the parking lot would be screened by an iron fence, landscaping and

street trees added along West McMicken. The Vine Street side is not fenced, but the steep slope and some interior trees help screen the lot.

In answer to Mr. Senhauser, Mr. Reinhaus said that the fencing along West McMicken would be of three types – iron picket at the parking lot, a solid wood privacy fence in front of the residential units and a slatted wood fence elsewhere. Mr. Senhauser suggested that the privacy for the outdoor spaces along West McMicken might be attained by a change in grade rather than by building barrier walls. He suggested that the fencing along McMicken could be made more uniform, thus linking the parking lot to the building and bringing a common unifying element to the various pieces along West McMicken. Mr. Bloomfield questioned whether areas in the front of the buildings should be for private use. Mr. Reinhaus said that he was open to suggestions, but was interested in maintaining a relationship to pedestrian traffic and that costs were an important factor.

Ms. Borys said that the level of detail in the drawings would allow only for the broadest overview. A more complete set would be required to evaluate the rehabilitation project and to determine whether the demolition of 14 West McMicken was justified. She said it was difficult from the submitted drawings to determine whether the 1/1 sash windows might be acceptable, that the degree of window modification is not clear and that the fencing elements were insufficient.

Mr. Bloomfield suggested that Mr. Reinhaus get professional assistance from someone knowledgeable about market economics and the design of historic buildings for reuse. Mr. Bloomfield said the fundamental issues of the project – layout and modifications to existing conditions – were not apparent in the naïve drawings submitted. He said that 14 West McMicken is important to the block and serves to frame the other buildings to be rehabilitated. Its demolition must be justified in the context of the total project.

Mr. Reinhaus responded that architect Ken Jones recommended demolition of 14 West McMicken and that its dimensions preclude parking within the structure. Mr. Reinhaus said that his project is a year behind schedule, that he needs to demolish 14 West McMicken and that he needs the Board's approval before the environmental review can proceed. Mr. Senhauser said the documentation was simply not sufficient to complete the Section 106 review. He said the Board would likely condition the demolition on the thoughtful rehabilitation of the remaining buildings.

Ms. Sullebarger summarized the Board's concerns regarding the major item it had identified for clarification/modification. They included:

- Replacement windows would be evaluated based on their original configuration, condition of the existing windows and their location on the buildings.
- Altered window and door openings may be acceptable, but should be kept as much as possible on minor elevations.
- The proposed landscaped, screened parking is acceptable.
- The McMicken Street fencing needs to be better unified in design and in its relation to the site and private spaces.

- 14 West McMicken is an interesting building and contributes to the streetscape; its history and alternatives to its demolition need to be explored.

Mr. Reinhaus said that his time and money are running out. He said he may abandon the residential project and simply lease the buildings to commercial/industrial tenants. He said he would still have to demolish 14 West McMicken to provide parking for such a venture. In answer to Ms. Sullebarger, Mr. Reinhaus said on-street parking will not, in his opinion, offset the need for a dedicated parking lot. He also said that safety is a major concern.

BOARD ACTION

No official action was required by the Board. The Board did encouraged the applicant to proceed on what would be a significant contribution to the neighborhood, but reiterated its concern that the applicant provide professionally prepared plans and elevations as would be required for submission for a building permit.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date